

Tavistock Urban District Council.



Report of
Medical Officer
of Health

For the year ending December, 1920.



J. Leslie Watt,

Medical Officer of Health.

COUNCIL OFFICES,

MARCH, 1921.

Report of Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman and Members of the Tavistock Urban District Council

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Report for the year ending December 31st, 1920.

A. Natural and Social Conditions of the District.

Physical Features. The Urban District of Tavistock lies in the valley of the River Tavy at approximately Lat. $50^{\circ} 33' N.$, Long $4^{\circ} 9' W.$ It comprises an area of 1,621 acres, and the altitude varies from 228ft. on the Plymouth Road, to 546ft. on the Hurdwick Road.

One-fifth of the District is Urban, and four-fifths Rural in character. The bulk of the former lies along the northern bank of the river, with a branch along a subsidiary valley to the north. The surface is hilly, with a general fall towards the river. The nature of the ground varies somewhat, in the higher portions, hard basaltic rock, shale, or freestone being reached within a few feet of the surface. In the lower-lying portions along the valley sand, gravel, and small boulders, interspersed with beds of loamy earth and weak clay, over-lie the rock and shale, with the result that sub-soil water along the valley is reached at very shallow depths.

Social Conditions. The leisured classes are represented largely by retired army, navy, civil officials, professional men, and retired tradesmen occupying detached and semi-detached villa residences. There are a few country seats in the district. The tradesmen of the town appear to be somewhat in excess, owing to the fact that as a market town trade formerly had the advantage of an active mining population.

The staple industry of the neighbourhood is agriculture, with wool-combing, quarrying, and the usual small engineering, milling, sawing, building and other works providing employment for the working classes of the community.

The Charities of the District are:—

Ford Street—four almshouses, each containing four rooms for the accommodation of one person.

Maynard's Charity—one house, containing four sets of rooms for the accommodation of old couples.

Brown Memorial—eight semi-detached cottages, each with living room, bedroom, and offices.

Watts and Ford Street Charities distribute doles of 10s. and upwards each year, to a total amount of about £300.

There is also a well-equipped Hospital.

B. Sanitary Circumstances of the District.

Water Supply The source of the main water supply is intermittent springs and sub-soil water, gathered in the Wallabrook and Sandypark valleys from large drainage areas. The water is collected by means of sub-soil land drains. Distribution is, except in the case of the Whitchurch Down Reservoir, by means of gravitation through mains that vary in size from 10ins. to 3ins. A storage of 440,000 gallons is provided for in three reservoirs, the largest, with a capacity of 290,000 gallons, being on the Kilworthy section, and acts generally as a balancing tank. The Whitchurch Down Reservoir is supplied from the Kilworthy service by means of a set of pumps fixed at the Wharf and worked by water power from the canal. The quality is good, and the quantity sufficient for the present requirements of the town, the springs at their lowest yielding over 75 gallons per head per day.

The houses in the district not supplied from the town mains are 23 drawing their supply from 13 wells and nine from springs.

The mains are liable to become considerably reduced in area from deposits of iron.

Rivers and Streams. The effluent from the sewage disposal works is above the standard of purity permissible for discharge into the river.

Drainage and Sewerage. The sewage disposal works at Crowndale, designed on the lines of a combined bacterial and broad irrigation system, would in themselves be adequate and satisfactory for the efficient treatment of the town sewage; but excess of sub-soil and other water render the affluent too dilute and considerably in excess of the quantity the works were designed to treat, and steps will eventually have to be taken to reduce the infiltration of water into the sewers.

The sewers on the southern side of the river are constructed of stoneware pipes on the "separate" system, and are satisfactory.

The main outfall sewer in the Crowndale Road is also constructed with stoneware and iron pipes, and is satisfactory.

Many of the sewers on the northern side are not, however, satisfactory. The more-recently-laid sections are of stoneware pipe, but the majority are defective, both as to system, type, and structural condition.

Closet Accommodation. There are ten earth closets in the district, all situated outside the houses, and with one exception in the rural part of the area. The system is, in the main, a water-carriage one, and of the water closets 1099 are provided with flushing apparatus and 27 are hand-flushed.

Scavenging. The whole of the work is carried out by direct labour.

The house refuse is collected from the main parts of the town twice a week, the outlying sections having one collection only. The refuse is deposited at a "tip" near the Gas Works, where glass, tins, and other hard refuse are separated as far as possible from the ordinary garbage. This method in pre-war days was effective, in so far that the farmers of the district removed the accumulation during certain periods of the year, but this practice has been practically discontinued, and the rubbish has accumulated, and at times somewhat of a nuisance is caused.

The question of securing a fresh "tip," the removal of the present accumulation, or the erection of a small destructor must be considered in the near future.

The method of removal would be rendered much less offensive by the use of a covered cart and the provision of uniform-pattern covered house bins.

Sanitary Inspection of the District. The details of this work are furnished in the Sanitary Inspector's Report.

Premises and Occupations. There are no offensive trades carried on in the district.

Schools. The town offers good educational advantages. The Kelly College and Grammar School for boys. There are two Ladies' Collegiate Schools and two private schools. The County Council and Church of England Schools supply facilities for elementary education.

The sanitary apparatus and fittings of the several schools are in good sanitary condition, with the exception of the lavatories at the Church of England School in Dolvin Road. The fittings for the most part are obsolete and though maintained satisfactorily should be replaced with a modern type. The reconstruction of these lavatories was under contemplation in 1914.

The water supply of all the schools in the Urban District is drawn from the town supply. The inspection of the scholars in the elementary schools is carried out by County Council Medical Officers, who negotiate through local channels for the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases.

Food. (a) No cases of infectious disease have been attributable to milk contamination.

Six of the eight dairies in the district have separate milk stores, of necessity comparatively small but clean. The method of cleansing milk vessels is, however, capable of considerable improvement.

Three of the four cowsheds in the district require considerable repair and improvement, one in fact, complete reconstruction. The floors of the three in question are paved with cobble stones. Water for cleansing is not available, manure is stored near the shed, the yard area is not paved. Overalls are not worn and the hands of the milkers and teats of cows are not cleansed before milking is done.

Regulations are in force, but the general terms such as "efficient" should be substituted by more definite and law-enforcing standards.

(b) The slaughter houses, although they do not conform to the various standards as laid down by the L.G.B. Memo., and are not situate 100 feet from any dwelling, are substantially constructed, paved, drained, and for business purposes conveniently situated. Easily accessible for the purpose of inspection, the buildings could, with slight alteration, be adapted to comply with most of the modern requirements, and provide separate compartments for slaughtering and hanging.

Housing. (a) The total number of Houses in the District is 922, and of these 637, in addition to 22 sets of rooms over business premises, are occupied by working class families.

The population remains practically stationary, and there is nothing to indicate any change.

The houses available provide sufficient accommodation, but the number of two-room cottages, tenement houses, rooms over business premises, and houses let to more than one family without adaptation, indicate the need for more modern accommodation.

(b) Overcrowding. Over 30 families of more than four are known to be living in two room cottages or tenements, that of necessity only provides one sleeping apartment.

(c) Fitness of Houses. Twenty-eight of the two room cottages and seven of the three room cottages are of the back to back type and have no means of through ventilation, a number are of necessity dark, owing to their situation.

Thirty-two of the tenement houses will require considerable alteration if they are to be brought up to a modern standard, but the bulk of the houses now let to more than one family can be easily adapted for two families.

Two houses, owing to their situation and dampness, are certainly unfit for occupation, and it is estimated that 13 others, in view of the amount of repair required, must also be deemed to be unfit.

The general character of the existing defects—

Insufficient means of ventilation.
Ground dampness.
Insufficient air space.

The Difficulties of remedying defects are —

Lack of accommodation.
Inability to define any definite standard to enforce.

Except in a very few cases the whole of the houses are supplied with water from the public supply. Closets are generally fitted with flushing apparatus. House refuse is collected twice a week, but the method of storage on the premises is capable of improvement by the substitution of proper covered galvanized bins.

(d) No action has been taken with regard to areas considered as unhealthy, nor has any information or complaint been received respecting same. Two small areas have been scheduled, involving about three-tenths of an acre and 75 inhabitants.

(e) No evidence is to hand that the existing Bye-laws have in any way interfered with the erection of houses, the question of obtaining sites for single houses at a reasonable price is and has been the only hindrance to the erection of a number of houses.

The erection of concrete houses, if allowed to continue, will necessitate one or two slight bye-law alterations.

(f) The number of houses inspected as shown by the Inspector's report is 176. No complaints have been made or received.

No closing orders have been issued or any obstructive buildings removed.

No Officer has been officially appointed under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulation 1910, but the work is carried out by the Inspector of Nuisances, who also acts as Surveyor and in other capacities, together with myself.

Food and Drug Acts. There is no organized system in the Urban District for carrying out the provisions of the Food and Drug Acts. The Police on occasion take samples of milk and butter.

The Markets, Slaughterhouses, etc., are inspected and foods diseased or unwholesome are dealt with under the Public Healths Acts. The seizures however during the period under review only consisted of two pig carcasses and one cow carcass and 26lbs. of tripe.

C. Sanitary Administration of the District.

The Staff consists of the Inspector of Nuisances, who also acts as Surveyor and in other official capacities.

The County Council have under consideration the provision of an Isolation Hospital, in conjunction with neighbouring districts.

There is no disinfecting chamber available for the district.

D. Prevalence of, and control over, Acute Infectious Diseases.

The number of cases notified under the Infectious Diseases (Notifications) Act, 1889, was 2 cases of Scarletina.

The Public Health (Pneumonia, Malaria, Dysentery) Regulations, 1919, 2 pneumonia and 2 malaria.

E. Prevalence of, and control over, Tuberculosis.

In all 6 cases were notified under the Public Health (Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1912. The localization of the disease in 5 of these was the lungs. Two of the cases were notified from Tavistock Hospital.

F. Influenza.

Influenza, which had been so prevalent in the latter part of 1918, has to a large extent disappeared. Two deaths, however, occurred from Influenza-Pneumonia, and one from Meningitis following Influenza.

G. Maternity and Child Welfare.

There has been a small Centre established in the district, in connection with Maternity and Child Welfare, which has been instrumental in doing good work and in giving advice, where it was badly needed.

The Vital and Other Statistics are appended.

J. LESLIE WATT,

March 25th, 1921.

Medical Officer of Health.

COUNCIL OFFICES,
TAVISTOCK.

Dr. J. L. Watt, Medical Officer of Health.

SIR,

I beg to submit the Inspector's Report for the year ending December 31st, 1920.

Inspections. The number of inspections made to the several classes of premises total 691, and are sub-divided into—

119	to	89 houses over £16 rateable value.
255	to	176 houses below £16 rateable value.
32	to	10 premises not otherwise included.
22	to	6 bakehouses.
18	to	12 dairies and cowsheds.
27	to	13 factories.
47	to	37 workshops.
171	to	slaughter-houses and markets.

Notices. these five are still outstanding, 39 nuisances have been abated, but in the majority of cases notices have not been required.

Sanitary Work. The chief Sanitary Improvements have been:—

Sixteen preliminary notices have been served and of			
New drainage systems laid and connected to sewer, ...	1.		
Drainage systems relaid and connected to sewer, ...	2.		
Drainage systems repaired and relaid in part, ...	18.		
Waterclosets provided for new houses, ...	1.		
Waterclosets provided for old houses, ...	9.		
Waterclosets repaired and flushing apparatus fixed, ...	12.		
Pail closets converted into waterclosets, ...	1.		
Offensive accumulations removed, ...	4.		

Housing Accommodation. One house has been erected during the year, and seven are under construction by private enterprise, and the Contract for the erection of fifty houses (40 parlour and 10 non-parlour type), under the Government Housing Scheme, has been signed and the work is in progress.

One house has been satisfactorily renovated under notice and representation has been made in a number of cases, but in view of the accommodation available, together with the class of repair necessary, the question of dealing with the houses has been deferred pending the completion of some of the new houses.

Disinfections. Twelve infected houses and three schools have been disinfected by means of the Formalin Spray and Lamp.

Dairies and Cowsheds. The dairies generally have been maintained in a satisfactory condition, and one of the restaurant dairies has provided a separate store for the milk and dairy produce, and it is expected the others will carry out like improvements during the coming months.

One of the cowsheds in the district is a model of cleanliness and modern construction, but of the other three, one requires complete reconstruction and the remaining two considerable alteration and repair.

Factories and Workshops. Fourteen factories, 37 workshops and workplaces, and 5 bakehouses have been inspected during the year. Lavatory accommodation has been provided for female workers in two cases and one watercloset has been reconstructed. The drainage system of one factory and one workshop has been repaired and notices to limewash in two workshops complied with. A small amount of upholstery is carried on in three workshops, but in every instance new flock is used in the work.

Slaughter Houses. The Slaughter Houses have been inspected on all recognised slaughtering days and at other times as deemed necessary, but the number of animals killed is very small compared with pre-war days. The buildings have been well maintained and conducted without complaint.

Three carcasses, one cow and one pig, affected with tuberculosis, and one pig badly jaundiced, have been condemned and destroyed, one other seizure of 26 lb. of tripe was made in the town.

House Refuse. The refuse removed has averaged over 30 tons per week during the year, and the accumulation at the Tip continues to increase. A start has, however, been made by one or two farmers to remove some of the refuse, and it is hoped their example will be followed by more. The accumulation naturally creates somewhat of a nuisance, but the precautions taken to date have minimized the effect and no complaint has been received on the subject.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal. One short length of defective sewer, 52 yards in length and 9 ins. in diameter, has been re-laid, and two defective connections made good. The main outfall sewer in the Plymouth Road from the Meadows Entrance to the Drake Statue, contains a large amount of sand and silt, and this will have to be removed in the near future. The length of masonry sewer in the New Market Road also contains a quantity of silt and sand. The Disposal Works at Crowndale continue to be maintained without complaint of nuisance or pollution, and in this connection it should be borne in mind that the average dry weather flow is always considerably in excess of the quantity the works were designed to treat.

Water Supply. 244 yards 4in. and 3in. cast iron water main have been laid for the supply of the new houses to be erected under the Government Building Scheme. Two new domestic services have been connected to the system. The Council have also under consideration the substitution of 998 yards of 6in. cast iron water main from Drake Road to the new building site.

The quality is satisfactory and the quantity supplied with the springs at their lowest was never less than 70 gallons per head per day.

F. CAMBLE, *Inspector.*

March 8th, 1921.

TABLE I.

Vital Statistics of whole District during 1920 and previous Years.

Year	Population	Births		Deaths		Transferable Deaths		Net Deaths belonging to the District			
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Non-Resi- dents Regis- tered	Resi- dents not Reg- istered	Under 1 Year		All Ages	
								Number	Rate	Number	Rate
1918	4147	50	12.2	92	24.3	19	4	4	80	65	17.2
1919	4214	56	13.1	81	20	16	4	2	35.4	64	15.3
1920	4206	69	16.1	83	19.2	21	3	9	130.3	68	16.7

Area of District in Acres (exclusive of area covered by water)—1621. Total population at all ages—4206.

Number of inhabited houses—921. Average number of persons per house—4.61.

TABLE 2.

Cases of infectious Diseases notified during the Year 1920.

Notifiable Diseases	Number of Cases Notified.					
	All Ages	Under 1 year	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 50
Scarlet Fever	2	—	1	1	—	—
Pneumonia	2	—	—	—	1	1
Malaria	2	—	—	—	—	2
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	5	—	—	2	—	3
Other forms of Tuberculosis	1	—	—	—	1	—
Total ...	12	—	1	3	2	6

TABLE 3.

Cases of, and ages at Death during the Year 1920.

Causes of Death	Net Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring within or without the District								Total deaths in Institutions
	All Ages	Under 1 year	1 to 5 years	5 to 15 years	15 to 25 years	25 to 45 years	45 to 65 years	over 65 years	
All cases certified	68	9	0	1	0	5	17	36	8
Influenza	3			1			1	1	
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	4				1	1	3		
Cancer	10						2	8	2
Meningitis	1	1							1
Organic Heart Disease	9					1	4	4	1
Bronchitis	4	1					1	2	1
Pneumonia	2	1				1			
Other Respiratory Diseases	3					1	1	1	
Diarrhoea and Enteritis	1						1		1
Nephritis and Bright's Disease	3						1	2	
Congenital Debility	4	4							
Violent Deaths	1						1		
Other Defined Diseases	23	2				1	2	18	2
Totals ...	68	9	0	1	0	5	17	36	8

NOTE—Under the heading "other defined diseases" the totals are: Spine Bifida, 2; Cerebral Haemorrhage, 2; Prostatic Hypertrophy, 1; Arterio-Sclerosis, Pernicious Anaemia, 1; Gastric Ulcer, 1; Senile Decay, 15.

TABLE 4.

Infant Mortality.

Net Births in the year. Legitimate—64. Illegitimate—5.

Net Deaths in the year. Legitimate Infants—9. Illegitimate—0.

I Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces,

Premises	Inspections	Notices
Factories ...	38	5
Workshops ...	47	2
Total	85	7

2 Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Particulars	Number	Number Remedied
Want of Cleanliness	2	2
Insufficient Sanitary accommodation	3	3
Total	5	5

3 Home Work. No lists furnished.

4 Registered Workshops.

Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	5
Smiths, 4 ; Wheelwrights, 3				...	...	7
Plumbers, 6 ; Carpenters, 6 ; Painters, 3				...	...	15
Upholsterers, 4 ; Printers, 1				...	...	5
Stonemasons	...	...	...	...	...	5
Motor Repairers, 2 ; Cycle Repairers					...	5
Saddlers, 1 ; Boot Repairers, 5				...	...	6
Dressmakers, 4 ; Milliners, 3				...	...	7
Tailors	...	...	...	...	...	5
Total						<hr/> 60 <hr/>

5 Other Matters.

